



**National
Weather
Service**

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Western Region Newsletter

April 2011

Regional Director's Message



It's been another busy month and once again, thanks to all for a job well-done. Not only did we experience storm after storm, with heavy rainfall, heavy snow, cold temperatures and gale force winds, we experienced a tsunami event on March 11. I am proud of the performance of our WFOs and RFCs, across

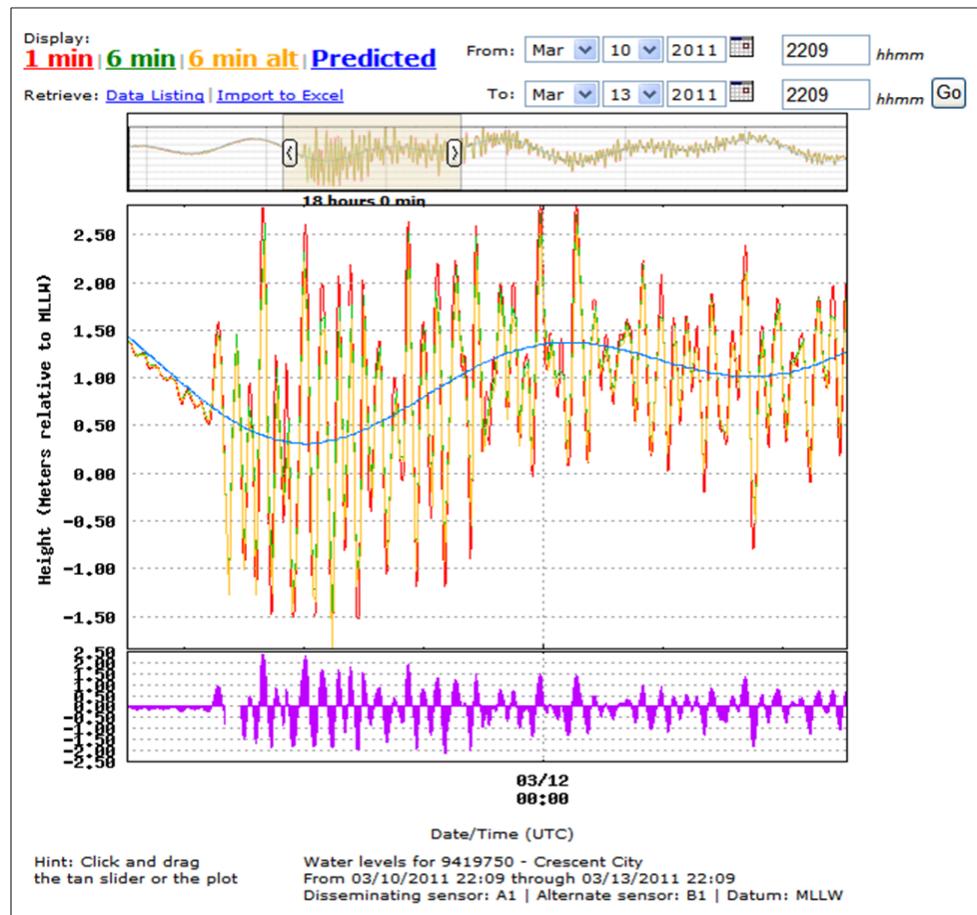
the Region. Your forecasts and warning have been outstanding and our preparedness and outreach activities paid off. With spring upon us, we are still under a continuing resolution without an appropriated budget for FY11. The continuing resolution will expire on April 8 and we will wait to see what the future holds for the Region. In the meantime, we must continue to fulfill our life saving mission, help many communities prepare for spring runoff, and prepare for fire and monsoon seasons. Again, keep up the good work.

Vickie

Featured Decision Support

At 946 PM PST, Thursday, March 10, 2011 a 9.0 earthquake centered off the coast of Japan created a tsunami that moved across the Pacific Ocean and brought large waves and extensive damage to sections of the US West Coast. The hardest hit area was Crescent City, CA where all docks in the harbor were destroyed, 16 vessels were sunk, 64 vessels were damaged and total damage costs are estimated at \$12.4M. Even with this amount of damage and the long duration of the event there was only one death. This low loss of life was due in large part to the preparedness activities of WFO Eureka.

WCM Troy Nicolini is part of the Redwood Coast Tsunami Workgroup (RCTWG) which has been working with the coastal counties on preparedness for many years. The single most important activity is the conducting of drills and tests. Crescent City is a TsunamiReady™ community and the reason they were ready is because they don't just check the boxes but they drill, drill, drill! Last year, Crescent City held the largest tsunami evacuation drill ever in the US. Drills are positive, community based experiences that cause people to feel empowered in their ability to survive the hazard and therefore develop positive feelings towards preparedness. They then share those feelings with their friends, family, and community members. These preparedness activities paid off with the recent event as emergency response officials were able to evacuate the low lying areas safely and effectively in the early morning hours. The citizens knew what to do and remained calm during the evacuation. *(continued on page3)*



NOAA National Ocean Service tide gage reading at Crescent City, CA

Featured Decision Support (continued)

The RCTWG has also worked closely with the commercial fishing fleet. A plan was developed, in conjunction with local fisherman, which included factors such as time to get to various ocean depths to ensure safety, plans for their families if the fisherman were unable to get back to Crescent City, identification of Humboldt Bay as a safe harbor, and the need for enough fuel to get to Humboldt Bay. The Working Group recruited two different commercial fishing boats to do a timed trial to determine how much time was needed to get from the entrance to the docks, down to their boats, to turn on their engines, untie, and to motor out to deep water. The result of this effort was used in the “T minus” times for the harbor. Because local boats were used and the strong social networks in the fishing community, there was a lot of confidence in the “T minus” times among the fleet. The result was that the majority of boat captains knew that they had to be at the dock within 1.5 hours of wave arrival to get their boats out safely. Having this established ahead of time was critical to avoid the situations in the past where neither harbor personnel nor boat captains really knew when the cut off time was and passionate arguments erupted. For this event the bulk of the Crescent City commercial fishing fleet was well aware of the dangers and had left the harbor before the tsunami waves arrived. They then went to safety in the Humboldt Bay harbor when it was determined it was impossible to return to Crescent City.



Damage to boats and docks at Crescent City Harbor. Source: AP

From an IDSS perspective, this event was really all about the pre-event DSS. Even though there is a lot of focus on the operational events of Thursday night and Friday, that is the secondary story. For all the areas along the West Coast for which this event went smoothly, it was the sustained activities over the past several years that made the difference. These activities included relationship building, community preparedness and planning, and public education. This serves as a reminder that IDSS starts with relationships. Fabulous job everyone at WFO Eureka in preparing your community for this event!

EMWIN Training

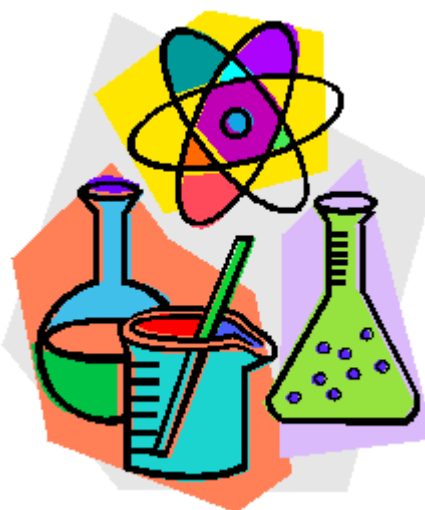
Fifty participants from many of the countries and island nations throughout Central America, the Caribbean, and North Atlantic attended an Emergency Managers Weather Information Network (EMWIN) training workshop in San Juan, Puerto Rico the week of February 21-25, 2011. The training was hosted by the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) through the UCAR Joint Office of Science Support (JOSS) for International Extension and Public Alert Systems (IEPAS). Countries represented were Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Bahamas, Bermuda, Anguilla, Cayman Islands, Puerto Rico/U.S. Virgin Islands, St. Lucia, Barbados, Dutch Netherlands (Bonaire, Curacao, Saba, St. Eustatius, and St. Maarten), and Haiti. Representatives from the University of Puerto Rico, the Caribbean Tsunami and Coastal Hazards Project also attended. Rob Balfour, from WFO San Diego, CA also attended this training. This was to prepare him for a Temporary Duty Assignment to Haiti. There he will be assisting in the installation of EMWIN stations and training Haitian emergency management agencies in its use. This is in support of a joint mission between U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), OFDA, United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the NOAA International Affairs Office (IAO).



Marcelin Esterlin, Gerard Metayer, Ronald LaForest of Centre National de Meteorologie (CNM Haiti) and Rob Balfour, WFO San Diego, working together to assemble the EMWIN antenna.

WFO Billings Participates in Billings Clinic Science Exposition

On March, 26, 2011, WFO Billings employees Marc Singer and Sean Campbell staffed an informative booth at the Billings Clinic Science Expo. The booth featured the popular Van de Graaff generator to demonstrate lightning and a tornado generator to explain how tornadoes form. Approximately 350 people, most of which were school-aged children, stopped by the booth during the day to interact with the displays and learn about various aspects of weather safety. The evening prior, several Billings staff members also volunteered to judge science projects as part of the event.



NWS Flagstaff Hosts an Amateur Radio Technician Class



On March 22, WFO Flagstaff kicked off a 5-day Amateur Radio Technician Class at its Bellemont, AZ WFO. This class, which was offered to WFO Bellemont staff and the local community, was organized by Nick Petro, Science and Operations Officer and was instructed by members of the Flagstaff-based Coconino Amateur Radio Club. NWS Flagstaff class participants included James Clark (ITO), Megan Schwitzer (General Forecaster), Steve Duaime (ET), and Eric Aselin (ET). In addition to the NWS staff, the course was attended by 13 members of the local community. Effective communication is a cornerstone of the NWS mission. When all ordinary forms of communication

A great turnout for the Amateur Radio Technician class hosted at WFO Flagstaff

fail during natural or man-made disasters, amateur radio is there to provide a critical communication link for dissemination and collection of life-saving information. The NWS Flagstaff supports the local amateur radio community by maintaining close relationships with its amateur radio and SKYWARN volunteers, and by sponsoring entry level amateur radio classes for persons interested in becoming licensed amateur radio operators.

WFO Oxnard Tsunami Awareness Activities



Mark Jackson (MIC) and Eric Boldt (WCM), from WFO Oxnard, attended a Ventura County (CA) Board of Supervisors meeting on March 22nd to discuss TsunamiReady and the WFO's working partnership with the County on tsunami preparedness. Ventura County officially proclaimed the week as "Tsunami Awareness Week" and will use this as a springboard to launch a public comment period on placement of tsunami evacuation signs and their overall tsunami emergency action plan.

Around the Region

Palo Verde Exercise Support

On March 1-2, WFO Phoenix participated in a FEMA-monitored and evaluated exercise involving an incident at Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station. During the exercise, WCM Ken Waters provided support at the Arizona State EOC, including forecasts and briefing information. At the WFO, Forecasters Matt Hirsch and Dan Leins prepared mock EAS broadcasts based on messages received from the Arizona and Maricopa County EOCs. According to the evaluators, NWS operations at the EOC and the WFO were excellent.



WFO San Diego Forecaster Visits Panama



Brandt Maxwell, forecaster at WFO San Diego, visited the National Hydrometeorological office at ETESA (Empresa de Transmision Electrica S.A.) on Feb. 24, 2011 during a vacation in Panama. Brandt witnessed their weather forecast operations and gave a short presentation about forecast operations in the National Weather Service. Brandt and the staff had additional discussions about IFPS and satellite and model data.

Brandt Maxwell (3rd from left) with the forecast staff at ETESA

StormReady Ceremony at NAS Lemoore, CA

WFO Hanford recently attended a ceremony to recognize the Lemoore Naval Air Station as a StormReady Community. NAS Lemoore is the 3rd Navy installation in the U.S. to meet StormReady Certification, and the 1st to do so west of the Mississippi River. Severe weather is not unknown to this military base of 16,000 people, where an F1 tornado directly struck in 1996 and caused substantial damage. WCM James Brotherton worked closely with Rainer Streib, Emergency Management Officer, and Heather Feigner, Emergency Management Office Manager, to meet the requirements of the StormReady program. Among the achievements of the emergency management staff was to install NOAA



L to R: Rear Adm. William French, Commander Navy Region Southwest, Heather Feigner, Emergency Management Office Manager NAS Lemoore, Steve Mendenhall, Meteorologist in Charge WFO Hanford, Rainer Streib, Emergency Management Officer NAS Lemoore, and Capt. James Knapp, Commanding Officer NAS Lemoore.

Weather Radios at all base schools, administrative offices, aircraft hangars, and other locations. A unique capability of the navy base, and one of the warning systems included in the Severe Weather Action Plan, is indoor and outdoor "giant voice" systems to notify personnel of hazardous conditions.

Around the Region

Billings Radar Repairs



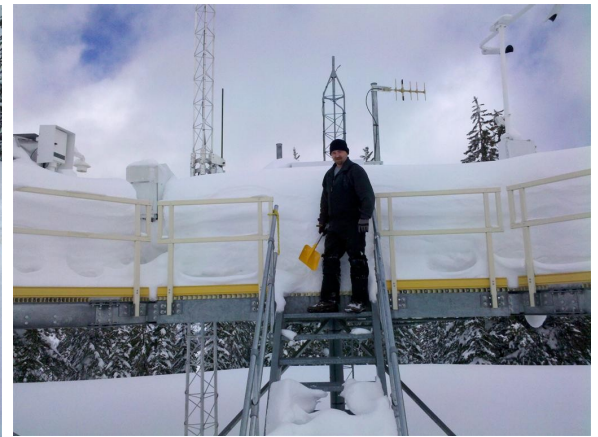
Jim Chaisson, Western Region FET from WFO Great Falls made an unscheduled visit to repair the UPS unit and HVAC compressor at the Billings, Montana Radar site. While on site Jim also found that the frequency of the generator was out of tolerance. Jim quickly diagnosed the problem and took corrective action to adjust the generator frequency. These vital subsystems are critical to the overall operation of the radar.

Visit to Mullan Pass Idaho ASOS

Brandon Crabtree and David Wheat, ETs from WFO Missoula had to snowmobile in to respond to an ASOS ceilometer heater/blower failure at KMLP, Mullan Pass, ID. KMLP is one of three elevated platform ASOSs in Western Region (others being KSMP, Stampede Pass, WA and KBLU, Blue Canyon, CA). The elevation of the KMLP site is 6000 ft. . While at the site Brandon and David encountered 12 to 12.5 feet of snow on the ground and a little over five feet on the platform.



David Wheat standing next to his snowmobile



Brandon Crabtree standing on the KMLP ASOS Platform

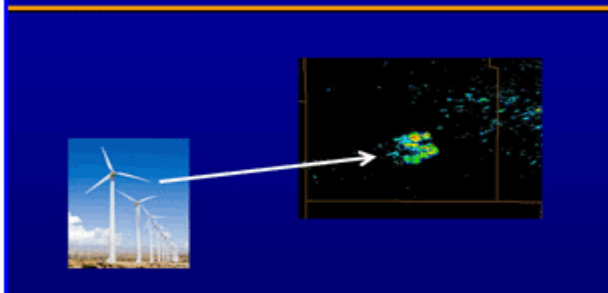
Arizona Weather Workshop - May 6 2011

The Arizona Weather Workshop will be co-hosted by WFO Phoenix and SRP (Salt River Project). The workshop focuses on meteorological, hydrological, climatological, and technical issues of interest to weather forecasters in the southwest United States. If you plan to attend, please send an email to Doug Green at doug.green@noaa.gov. Speakers/presenters should provide the following: 1) speaker name, 2) working title, 3) brief abstract, 4) amount of time for presentation, and 5) special needs/requests.

Wind Farms, the WSR-88D and Coexistence

Significant growth of wind farms for alternative energy production is well underway in the U.S. In some cases, wind turbines have been placed close enough to WSR-88D radars to create Wind Turbine Clutter (WTC) on the radar products.

Wind Turbine "Signal"



WDTB and the Radar Operations Center (ROC) have collaborated on this training module. It is designed to inform NWS decision makers, tri-agency partners, and wind energy proponents to support a cooperative environment for all as wind energy continues to develop.

New NCEP Newsletter

NCEP has started a new newsletter, which will appear on a quarterly basis. The newsletter can be accessed via: <http://www.ncep.noaa.gov/newsletter/> or directly from NCEP's home page <http://www.ncep.noaa.gov/>.

New River Flood Warning Training

The OCWWS Performance Branch has released a new training module titled **River Flood Warning Verification Program**. This 20-minute module is available in the NWS Learning Center. Topics covered include, the objective and history of river flood warning verification, where the warning events used in this program come from, how to run verification reports, and analyzing the data in verification reports.



Length of Service Awards



Gilstad, Aaron	WFO Billings, MT	Forecaster	5 Years
Johnson, Timothy	WFO Hanford, CA	Electronics Technician	5 Years
McGuire, Scott	WFO Reno, NV	Observing Program Leader	10 Years
Paradis, Linda	WFO Flagstaff, AZ	Administrative Support Assistant	10 Years
Huston, Michael	WFO Pocatello, ID	Lead Forecaster	20 Years
Clemmons Jr., Thomas	WFO Flagstaff, AZ	Lead Forecaster	20 Years
Barker, Timothy	WFO Boise, ID	Science and Operations Officer	20 Years
Stockton, Jay	WFO Medford, OR	Lead Forecaster	25 Years
Bernard, Brent	CBRFC Salt Lake City, UT	Hydrologist	25 Years
McDonnal, Douglas	WFO Seattle, WA	Lead Forecaster	25 Years
Kusyj, Stephen	WFO Flagstaff, AZ	Electronic Systems Analyst	30 Years
Moravitz, Terri	CNRFC Sacramento, CA	Administrative Support Assistant	30 Years
Miller, Randy	WRH/SOD Salt Lake City, UT	Engineering Technician	35 Years
Pereira, Michael	WFO Boise, ID	Electronics System Analyst	40 Years
Tannenholz, Joel	WFO Boise, ID	Forecaster	40 Years

New Hires in Western Region for March

Palmer, Cynthia	WFO San Diego, CA	Lead Forecaster
Alyward, Ryan	WFO Eureka, CA	General Forecaster
Hewko, Jr. Wasyl	WFO Boise, ID	HMT
Clevenger, Joseph	WFO Spokane, WA	Meteorologist Intern

Departures From Western Region For March

Latto, Andrew	WFO Flagstaff, AZ	MET Intern	Transferred to WFO Wilmington,
Clark, Joseph	WFO Eureka, CA	MET Intern	Transferred to WFO Detroit, MI
Bloemer, Matthew	WFO Eureka, CA	MET Intern	Transferred to WFO Key West, FL
Streubel, David	WRH/HCSO Salt Lake City, UT	Hydrologist	Transferred to APRFC
Simpson, Becky	WRH/SOD Salt Lake City, UT	Administrative Support Assistant	Transferred to U.S. Marshal Service,

Please send newsletter submissions to:
matt.ocana@noaa.gov and levi.wilmert@noaa.gov
by the **25th** of every month.